

7. THE SA. AND SS.

Note

The SA.

On the principles which guided Hitler in the creation of the *Sturmabteilungen* — the Storm Sections — of the Party cf. *MK*, pp. 546 sqq. (German), pp. 404 sqq. (English); pp. 598-620 (German), pp. 439-53 (English). They were to form a troop to keep order at meetings and were to be a means of educating the masses in the principles of the Party. Since the establishment of the National Socialist Government and the elimination of the Chief of Staff, Roehm, in the "Purge" of 1934 the SA. has become of less importance, but of recent years it has been given the duty of encouraging and maintaining the military spirit amongst the German people.

In the Introduction to the Service-Order (*Dienstvorschrift*) of the SA. Hitler thus defined its task:

"The SA on behalf of our German people must educate the young German in mind and body so that he becomes a man hard as steel and ready to fight. "

"Out of hundreds of thousands of individuals it must forge one united, disciplined, mighty organization."

"In the age of Democracy the authority of the Leader, in the period of unbridled freedom, iron discipline, must be the foundations of the SA."

"In so far as nothing illegal is demanded of the SA. its obedience must be a blind obedience."

"The highest honor of the SA is highest loyalty. On this loyalty the violence and the terrorism of our foes will be broken."

"The SA even now carries before its storm-formations the banner of the new Reich; its cockades are the eagles of the coming uprising of our people."

The SA. has received a new educational function through the development given to the SA. Sport-badge (*Sportabzeichen*). On 15 February the SA. *Sportabzeichen* was refounded by Hitler: the text of the Order was as follows:

"The new State needs a hard stock which is capable of resistance. Alongside of the *weltanschaulich* schooling of the mind we must demand a combative (*kämpferische*) schooling of the body through simple, useful, and natural bodily exercises. In order to give increased attraction and direction to the efforts of youth I renew for the entire SA. and all its former branches the foundation of the SA. Sport-Badge which shall be won, after a period of training conscientiously pursued, through the passing of an examination in proficiency. In order to give conscious expression to the cultivation of the military (*wehrhaften*) spirit in all sections of the German people I further determine that this SA. Sport-Badge may be won and worn also by those who are not members of the Movement provided that they comply both in race and *Weltanschauung* with National Socialist conditions."

But this order provided only for a single test; it was therefore supplemented by an order of the Führer issued on 18 March 1937; it ran as follows:

"Through my order of 15 February 1935 I have declared that the SA. Sport-Badge is *the* means for a combative schooling of the body and for the cultivation of the military spirit in all sections of the people. In order to secure that the military fitness (*Wehrtüchtigkeit*) of the bearers of the SA. Sport-Badge should be preserved to an advanced age, I empower the Chief of Staff of the SA. through the issue of regulations to make the future possession of the SA. Sport-Badge dependent upon the performance of certain repeated exercises. Further, I raise the Record of Achievement of the SA. Sport-Badge to the position of an official document (*Urkunde*) which gives information concerning the bodily capacity, the character and *weltanschaulich* attitude of the holder of the SA. Sport-Badge."

By a further order Hitler transformed the SA. Sport-Badge into a Military Badge (*Wehrabzeichen*), and made it the basis of education both before and after the period of service in the army. The SA. was appointed to carry out this training. " Every German man who has completed his 17th year and who complies with the conditions for honorable service in arms has the moral duty in order to prepare for military service to win the SA. Military-Badge. The members of the Hitler Youth should, on completion of their 16th year, prepare themselves for gaining the SA. Military-Badge. Those soldiers who have been honorably dismissed from active service and are still capable of service are to be formed into military companies (*Wehrmannschaften*) in order to preserve their mental and bodily powers and are to be associated with the SA. in so far as they are not attributed to other branches of the Party (SS., Motor Corps, Flying Corps) for special training. In the companies they will receive their military fitness training on the basis of the SA. Military-Badge. "

The Chief of Staff of the SA. is alone responsible for the execution of this order, and in this work of education he is to receive full support from the Party.

A brief chronological sketch of the development of the SA. may be of service.

1921. 3 Aug. Formation of a Protection and Propaganda Troop of the Party (after 5 Oct. known as *Sturmabteilung* [SA.], i.e. Storm-Section of the Party).

4 Nov. After the *Saalschlacht* in the Hofbräuhaus, Munich Hitler formally confers upon the troop the name *Sturmabteilung* as a title of honor.

1922. 16 Aug. Demonstration of the Munich Vaterländische Associations on the Königsplatz in Munich. The SA. appears for the first time with its swastika flags flying.

Sept. Formation of the SA. of Munich and neighboring districts together with the SA. of Tölz and Rosenheim into eight "Hundreds" (*Hundertschaften*): other "Hundreds" continue to be formed.

14-15 Oct. The "German Day" in Coburg.

1923. 11 Jan. The French enter the Ruhr. In consequence of this the SA. is transformed into a military association (*Wehrverband*).

1923. 28 Jan. At the first *Reichsparteitag* of the NSDAP. Hitler dedicates the first four "standards" designed by himself and executed by the master-goldsmith Otto Gahr. For the first time a part of the SA. appears in regular uniform: Ski-cap, wind-proof jacket, and swastika arm-band.

Beginning of February: SA. joins with other Bavarian military associations to form the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der vaterländischen Kampfverbände*.

Mar. Hermann Goering as Commander undertakes the leadership of the whole SA.

1 May. Armed march of all Bavarian SA. and other military associations to Oberwiesenfeld, near Munich: intervention of Police and Reichswehr.

8-9 Nov. The "Putsch". SA. dissolved by order of Generalstaatskommissar von Kahr.

13 Nov. The Franconian SA. Leader Buch the commander of the disbanded SA.

1924. 1 Apr. Roehm is given full authority to reconstitute the SA. and is appointed by Goering deputy commander of the SA. Rossbach becomes Chief of Staff.

1 Apr. Meeting of Leaders of SA. in Salzburg, Roehm presiding. It is resolved to introduce the brown shirt as uniform for the SA.

1925. Z26 Feb. The SA. re-formed by Hitler no longer as a military association but once again as a troop to control meetings and for propaganda.

1 May. Disagreement between Roehm and Hitler on the character of the SA. Roehm desires the SA. to be independent of the Party and to support the Nationalist Movement; Hitler wishes the SA. to be a branch of the Party organization. Roehm retires from the leadership of the SA.

1926. 1 Nov. Formation of the Supreme SA. Leadership in Munich as Central Office: to this the SS. and the Hitler Youth are subordinated. Gauleiter and SA. Leader Franz von Pfeffer is appointed Supreme SA. Leader (*Osaf*).

1927. 21 Aug. Third *Reichsparteitag* in Nuremberg: 30,000 SA. men march past Hitler.

1929. 28 Mar. Formation of the SA. Reserve for members of the Party over 40.

4 Aug. Fourth *Reichsparteitag* in Nuremberg. SA. and SS. men march past Hitler.

1930. 1 Apr. Formation of SA. Motor Troop and National Socialist Automobilcorps (NSAK) as subsidiary organization of the SA.

29 Aug. Pfeffer retires.

2 Sept. Hitler assumes supreme command of SA. and SS. (C. 100.000 men), recalls Roehm from Bolivia and appoints him Chief of Staff.

1931. 5 Jan. Roehm takes up his duties as Chief of Staff

14 Jan. Himmler as Reich-Leader of SS. placed under the Chief of Staff.

1 Apr. Revolt of Stennes: Stennes excluded from the Party (see K. Heiden, *A History of National Socialism*, London, 1934, pp. 127-8). Hitler writes: "SS. man, the name of your honor is loyalty."

1 May. Formation of the National Socialist Motor Corps (NSKK) in place of the NSAK (cf. 1930 1 April).

15 June. School for Reich Leaders of SA. and SS. in Munich opened by Hitler.

8 Dec. Brüning's Fourth Emergency Regulation forbids the wearing of uniforms throughout the Reich.

1932. 13 Apr. SA. forbidden.

17 June. Veto on uniforms and SA. withdrawn.

1933. 30 Jan. The Torch March into Berlin of SA. and SS.

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V. Lutze, *Wesen und Aufgaben der SA*. (in the series "Hier spricht das neue Deutschland", Heft 12). Munich, Eher, 1936, and *Reden an die SA. Der politische Katholizismus* (in the same series, Heft 10), 1935.

Note

The SS.

The *Schutzstaffel* was originally formed in the year 1923.

After the failure of the 'Putsch' on 9 November 1923 the SS. Organization (Stosstrupp Hitler) was forbidden and disbanded. In 1925, when the Party was reformed, the SA. was still forbidden, but in this year Hitler ordered the creation of a small mobile organization to protect meetings. These *Schutzstaffeln* were at first quite small bodies of men, consisting for the most part of a leader and ten men: they were stationed in the separate towns which it was hoped to win for the Movement. In 1926 the SA. were allowed once more to exist and in consequence the SS. played a less prominent part. In 1926 the SS. numbered some 200 men, and at the second Parteitag in Weimar in this year it was entrusted with the custody of the "Blood Flag" of the "Putsch", "the most sacred symbol of the Movement". On 6 January 1929 Hitler appointed Heinrich Himmler to be Reich-Leader of the SS., then consisting of some 280 men. Himmler, at Hitler's order, began forthwith to enlarge the organization. On 31 December 1931 the "Marriage Order" was issued which provided that no SS. man should marry without the approval of the Reich-Leader, acting on the advice of the "Race-Office". On marriage without such consent the offending SS. man will be dismissed from the service. When the National Socialists came to power in 1933 the SS. had 52,000 members. On 20 July 1934 the SS. became an independent branch of the Party and was put directly under Hitler's orders. By an order of the Chancellor of 17 June 1936 the control of the entire German police was put into the hands of the Reich-Leader of the SS.

It may be added that by the law of 9 November 1935 every SS. man has the right and the duty to defend his honor with weapons. The form of the SS. oath is: "We swear to you, Adolf Hitler, as Leader and Chancellor of the German Reich, loyalty and bravery. We pledge to you and to the officers appointed by you obedience to the death. So help us God!" In the SS. catechism the SS. man professes his faith in "a Lord God"; as Himmler has written: "You may rest assured that we could not have formed this corps sworn to unity if we had not the conviction of and faith in a Lord God Who stands above us, Who has created us and our Fatherland, our people and this earth and Who has sent us our Leader."

Bibliography

For the organization of the SS. cf. Gunter d'Alquen, *Die SS. Geschichte, Aufgabe und Organisation der Schutzstaffeln der NSDAP Bearbeitet im Auftrage des Reichsführers SS.* (Schriften der Hochschule für Politik, ed. P. Meier Benneckenstein, ii. "Der organisatorische Aufbau des Dritten Reiches", fleit 33), Berlin, Junker und Dünnhaupt, 1939. See H. Himmler, *Die Schutzstaffel als antibolschewistische Kampforganisation*, Munich, Eher, 1936, and in particular the very interesting study by A. Schweder, *Politische Polizei*, Berlin, Heymann, 1937, pp. 141-87. This book contains a full bibliography, pp. 187-97. Cf. W. Best, "Neuordnung des Polizeirechts", *Jahrbuch der Akademie für Deutsches Recht*: 1938. Berlin and Munich, Schweitzer, pp. 44-50: see also *ibid.*, 1937, pp. 132-8; A. Köttgen, "Polizei und Gemeinde", *Jahrbuch für Kommunal-wissenschaft* 3 (1936), Part ii, pp. 1-21 (on the conception of the police in the National Socialist State);

Hitler, when laying down the principles which were to determine the character of the SA., declined to make of them military formations: the members of the SA. were to be "political soldiers". If the SA. were formed as a military body, time would tell and the years would quench the fanatical ardor of these fighters. They would necessarily increasingly assume the character of an association of veterans: MK., p. 604 (German), p. 443 (English). In fact gatherings of the SA. have of recent years increasingly come to resemble such an association and thus it is of memories of the past that the Führer speaks to them:

"When I look back on all the past, on all that truly wonderful development, then it is that again and again I become conscious of the dream-like element in the story of the rise of the Party, and then you can realize what it means to me myself when I can return into the circle of those who once with me began to tread this way. So it is something uplifting for me when I can return to those whom I did not come to know first in 1933, but whom I knew in the time when to be a National Socialist meant only danger.... Germany has after all become the Germany for which we hoped; and that it shall ever become more and more that which we proclaimed in this hall in our programme nineteen years ago, that must be our task now, and must remain our task for the future. And that we shall reach our goal is as certain as that I stand here. When we some day close our eyes, then those who come after us will obtain something different from that which we received nineteen years ago."

"Through putting forward intolerant demands in our Programme we repelled tolerant natures; through the practice of a continuous passion for attack and joy in attacking we drew to us those who were always ready for a fight. And so at that time I began to collect that old guard which — with few exceptions — has never since deserted me."

At the Leipzig trial of 1930 Hitler spoke of the SA. as Schutzabteilungen (Protective Divisions): he said that their sole object was the protection of National Socialist propaganda. In 1925, after the failure of the "Putsch", he had given orders that the SA. should carry no weapons and that they should in no way have a military character.

In his evidence given at the trial of four National Socialists on 8 May 1931 Hitler said: "I have never allowed anyone to doubt that I demand from the SA. the absolute observance of the legal way, and when this veto on violence has in any case not been observed I have brought to book the leaders or sub-leaders concerned."

At the same trial Hitler stated that formerly SA. stood for "Saalschutzabteilung" (the corps for protecting the halls where National Socialist meetings were held); later it had stood for Sport-Abteilung, and lastly for Sturm-Abteilung (storm-division). But these meanings of the letters SA. were really irrelevant, for SA. is a special conception and stands for itself: it has grown out of and beyond the original significations attached to the words.

In the winter of 1931 there was discontent and impatience amongst the SA. Hitler in a proclamation to SA. and SS. men assured them that victory was certain if they remained true to their policy of legality. Their enemies were trying to provoke them, so that they should lose their nerve, so that "holy anger" might lead them to unconsidered action. They were not to allow themselves to be provoked. Up to the present time they had had to set their teeth and fulfill their duty. "He who has failed in the last days of his test is not worthy to witness victory." When in April 1932 the SA. were disbanded by the Government and Hitler was asked how he would maintain the Party organization without their help he replied: "The methods used for gaining power were in the past and remain today strictly constitutional. Consequently I do not need the assistance of the SA. in order to gain power in Germany."

In his speech in the Sportpalast in Berlin to SA. and SS. men on 8 April 1933 Hitler said:

"Justice (*Recht*) lies not without us but within us. It can lie in our own strength alone. Only strength is at any time justified in raising claims, never weakness. Only strength can wake justice into life"....

"We wished to burn into our Movement from the first: Never will anything be given us, nothing yielded, nothing secured which we are not strong enough to give ourselves. Thus it was that formerly the SA. arose, created out of a handful of men who had been comrades in the War. Opponents sought at that time to bend the young Movement through terrorism. I looked from the State of that day to the people, and I said to myself: here from the people itself must arise the arms, the weapons, with which we wish to conquer our world. Two motives stood godparent at the birth of the SA. and SS.: we, National Socialists, wanted to protect ourselves and not beg for the help of others. But if we wanted to attain this end, we must in the future create a new people, and for this purpose we must put constraint upon ourselves, must gain self-mastery, must overcome everything in ourselves which we regarded as harmful for our people. What really has value for the centuries and the millennia can only grow up from within. And so we wanted in ourselves to train that character which was to form the content of the new Reich. That must be practiced on a small scale which later one hopes one can practice on the great scale. These bands of young fighters should rise to that courage which, we expected, would one day inspire the whole people: theirs should be the discipline, the faith in leadership and authority which, as we have experienced a thousand times in our history, can alone give to the people the power to triumph over the mass-madness of unreason and to strive towards a goal." *Hitler then proceeded to inculcate obedience, endurance, and discipline:* "we belong to a generation which must make good what others have made badly. We are a generation which must sacrifice more than our predecessors. Destiny desires to test us: shall the German people live and grow, or has the end of our people now come? . .

In history generations have been forgotten, . . . but the generation of the brown storm-army of the German nation will never in the people's history sink into oblivion."

In the same speech to the SA. of Berlin on 8 April 1933 Hitler said:

"I can say with pride, comrades of the SA. and SS., that if the whole German people now was possessed of the spirit which is in us and in you, then Germany would be indestructible. Even without arms, Germany would represent an unheard of strength through this inner will tempered like steel. It is true that this equality which is realized in you was realized only at the cost of that freedom of which others spoke. We have, too, adopted the principle of leadership, the conception of authority. That was a heavy sacrifice at a time when the whole people was running after the illusion of democracy and parliamentarianism, when millions believed that the majority was the source of a right decision. It was at this time that we began resolutely to build up an organization in which there was not one dictator but ten thousand. When our opponents say: 'It is easy for you: you are a dictator' — we answer them, 'No, gentlemen, you are wrong; there is no single dictator, but ten thousand, each in his own place.' And even the highest authority in the hierarchy has itself only one wish, never to transgress against the supreme authority to which it, too, is responsible. We have in our Movement developed this loyalty in following the leader, this blind obedience of which all the others know nothing and which gave to us the power to surmount everything."

In a speech at Kiel on 7 May 1933 Hitler said:

"You have been till now the Guard of the National Revolution; you have carried this Revolution to victory; with your name it will be associated for all time. You must be the guarantors of the victorious completion of this Revolution, and it will be victoriously completed only if through your school a new German people is educated."

Hitler, in a speech at Erfurt on 16 June 1933, said to the men of the SA. and SS.: "And if you were often hard, yes, and ruthless and harsh, yet you were always only good Germans."

In his speech to political leaders, delivered at Nuremberg on 18 September 1935, Hitler said that the annual meeting of the Leader and his followers was a lesson to those who tried to draw a distinction between them, to those who would say, "The Führer, yes! But the Party, is that necessary?" "My question," Hitler continued, "is not 'Is that necessary?' but 'Was that necessary?' A commander without officers and soldiers — could many people make much of that? I will not be the commander without soldiers, but I will remain your Leader. For me you are the political officers of the German nation, bound up with me for better or for worse, even as I am bound up with you for better or for worse. It was not one man who conquered Germany, it was all in common who conquered Germany. One man has won you, and you have won the German people! One man has conquered with his will, and you have conquered

with your wills. One man stood at the head as leader in the Reich, and you stood every one of you at the head and led in the battle whether in a Gau or a District or a local center (*Ortsgruppe*), and everywhere the National Socialist who stood at the head was better than the foes who stood against him! Just as lasting success for an army is unthinkable, when although the chief of staff has genius, the soldiers are incapable, so is it here. Take a commander of the highest genius: he can carry into execution his conceptions and his plans only when he possesses an instrument which is out and out superior to the enemy. And for my conquest of Germany I have to thank this instrument, which was created in the National Socialist Movement and in its organizations. "

"Is this fight, then, a closed chapter? The conquest of power is a process which is never, never ended, for here, if anywhere, does the principle hold true, 'What you have won, win it ever anew, if you are to possess it!' There is no people in history that has won liberation as a gift, there is no people that will keep its freedom as a gift! Always and for ever must this precious possession be guarded without ceasing. And thereto are we National Socialists resolved! We do not believe that our development is at an end; on the contrary we shall continue to work, we shall continue to mold ourselves, and to make ourselves ever more worthy to be the sole bearers of authority in the German people."

"So the fight goes on, and now we are coming to the period of our second great task, the continuous education of our people, and the constant watch upon our people. Education to the end that all of us and our German people may be increasingly drawn into the world of the National Socialist idea, and watchfulness in order that continuously we may see to it that nowhere shall there be found retrogression or collapse. The fate which was unleashed upon the world in 1918 shall never strike us. Just as we mean to gather here together, year after year, in answer to this general muster, so we mean to hold continual musters of the German nation. And that is necessary. You have been specially favored by destiny, for your school was the school of battle. You old ones have finished your education, but the German youth must go to school with the old ones. It can learn something in that school; it can learn to measure the importance of men from a higher standpoint than that of their origin, their profession, or their social position. Where would Germany be today, if her resurrection had had to wait for those who in former times imagined themselves called to the leadership of the nation? There is but one calling, which becomes visible only in the midst of the conflict. Hoist the flag of courage, of willingness for sacrifice, of devotion, and mark well who ranges himself under it. Mark those who are drawn by the flag, for it is they who are called to lead a people, and no one else."

"For sixteen years our Party has been in existence. An intolerably long time, I feel certain, for our enemies, but for us hardly a beginning. Our enemies may think, perhaps, that if they wait long enough, they will see the end of our Movement; but they have not yet seen the beginning! When we started this struggle we set before ourselves stern maxims, definite principles. Because we have fought loyally for them, year after year, we have become great and strong. Often the heavens hung dark above us, and our enemies rejoiced. But in such times the truth of the old maxim is proved: 'Only the strength which can withstand the storm is really strong.' What can be broken is no good! Iron principles, hard and difficult though they were, we set before ourselves at that time; and these principles we have followed uncompromisingly to the present day, nor do we purpose to depart one centimeter from them in the days to come. We decide our course: we decide the tempo of our progress; but none of us any longer decides our goal; for us that is fixed!"

"There are perhaps in Germany certain individuals who either regard this Movement as an incomprehensible phenomenon, or else cannot make at all clear to themselves the reason for its existence, and who comprehend still less clearly the conditions which made its existence a necessity, and why in the future it will never be overthrown. They have not felt one breath of the spirit which governs this Movement; they have experienced nothing of the strength of this ideal; they have remained cold. They imagine that a people and a State are nothing but a lifeless machine, which can be set in action only by considerations of reason. They have not understood that these 68 millions of men could never be governed by commands, as they could by an appeal to their inner instincts, an appeal to their conscience. Where should we stand today if we had not found the way to the soul of our people? . . . The strength of idealism alone has accomplished these acts which have moved the world. Were any yet greater proof needed of the might of idealism, it can be found in this Movement. At its beginning there stood the word idealism; not calculation — we did not reckon up the risks! What could a man, who undertook single-handed to take the field against a world of enemies, what could he expect? I made the venture, because I believed that I knew the heart-beat of my people: and I was not deceived."

"You have all felt this in the past, for to every single one of you at some time has occurred the reflection that it is no subtlety of the intellect, but rather an inner voice that has at some time given its commands to every one of you."

Reason must have dissuaded you from coming to me; faith alone gave you the command. What idealism it was — but what a force lay in that idealism!"

In his speech to the "political soldiers" of the Movement at the Nuremberg Parteitag of September 1937 Hitler said:

"In the past it was easy to say that the battle must be fought with the weapons of the spirits while the enemy met the invasion of the spirit with the crashing blows of violence (*mit Brachialgewalt*). If it had been a question of the spirit alone, Germany would never have sunk so low. The spirit in the life of the German people has always sought to further the right and to do the right. But against this spirit of reason a conspiracy of baseness and of infamy had set itself, against this spirit violence had revolted. The conspirators had no wish that to the German people reason and understanding should return. And when the first men arose who, with me and supporting me, began to preach the reasonableness of a community of the people, immediately those who were interested in maintaining the division of the people opposed us not with the weapons of the spirit but with the strong right arm of violence (*mit dem brachialen Mittel der Gestalt*). We National Socialists and former front-line fighters, however, refused to submit and were resolved to meet this violent attack against reason with the violence of reason. And the forces of this violence of reason were embodied in the Stormdivisions of my Party: they were a stout fist against him who ventured with violence to hinder our campaign of the spirit and of reason. You all know this struggle which lasted for fifteen years: during those years gradually with our National Socialist fists we broke down the opposition of our foes: we captured place after place, destroyed the Red Terror, and thus for the first time opened up a clear path for the entry of the spirit. That is your historical achievement!"

"This struggle has demanded not only sacrifice in blood, but above all inner sacrifices of the spirit. How many of you had to endure for long years the life of outlaws in this Germany which none has loved more than you did! Many of you had to pay the cost of this struggle with the loss of your position and of your daily bread. And for years you have had ranged against you not only the brutal violence of the organized mob, you have had against you, too, the authority of the State, the ally of this mob. There hardly seemed any prospect that you could succeed against this conspiracy of baseness, of unreason and of power". . .

"And yet today Germany has in truth risen again and risen again as our work!"

Note

I do not think that anywhere in his speeches Hitler has referred directly to the SS., although he has addressed members of the SS. as well as of the SA. I do not know what may have been the reason for this silence.